

REMARKS

Claims 12-20, 22-26, 28-38 and 40-45 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 12, 14, 15, 22, 28 and 38 are amended, and new claim 46 is added. The amendments to claims 12, 15, 28 and 38 are supported in the application as originally filed at paragraphs [0052] and [0053], and the amendments to claim 14 and new claim 46 are supported in the application at paragraphs [0041]. No new matter is added.

In view of at least the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the allowance of claims 18-20.

The Office Action rejects claims 12, 13, 15, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28-34, 37, 38 and 40-45 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,384,628 to Takami et al. ("Takami"); rejects claims 14 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Takami in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,137,796 to Takiguchi et al. ("Takiguchi"); and rejects claims 16, 17, 24 and 35 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Takami in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,594,462 to Ishii et al. ("Ishii"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Takami relates to a developing device in which a toner and developer are mixed. See Takami at col. 2, lines 27-30. Referring to Fig. 2 of Takami, toner is introduced into a toner storage chamber by toner conveyance groove 32. The toner is then introduced into a developing chamber by supply roll 18. In the developing chamber, transport rollers 52 and 54 pick up developer from the developer sleeve 16 by operation of the transport rollers 52, 54 and screws 20, 22. Developer is mixed with toner and the mixture is subsequently transported to the rear of device 50 to a position where the developing sleeve 16 faces drum 12.

Takami does not disclose or suggest a developing device where a supply device is at least partially shielded from the developing agent as recited in, for example, independent claims 12, 15, 28 and 38. Claim 12 recites, for example, "a first means that prevents a weight of the developing agent contained in the developing agent container from directly acting in a vertical direction on an entirety of the supply device." The Office Action asserts that Takami discloses this feature because (referring to Fig. 2) Takami allegedly discloses a supply device 54 that is shielded from the developing agent by a wall formed from items 40 and 28. See, Office Action at page 2. However, the so-called supply device referred to in the Office Action (item 54) is not a "supply device" under any reasonable interpretation of the pending claims, because roller 54 does not appear to supply developing agent or any other materials to a developing agent carrier. The developing agent carrier (cited as item 16 in the Office Action) does not receive any developing agent from roller 54, and instead Takami teaches that roller 54 uptakes developing agent from sleeve 16. See, e.g., Takami at col. 6, lines 38-41; col. 6, lines 55-62; and col. 9, lines 47-56.

For purposes of clarity, claim 12 is amended to recite that the supply device is in contact with the developing agent carrier. This feature is not disclosed in Takami with respect to roller 54, because Takami teaches that there is a gap between roller 54 and the developing sleeve 16. See, e.g., Takami at col. 6, lines 55-58. Accordingly, transport roller 54 does not correspond to the "supply device" of claim 12.

Takami may disclose a supply roller located as item 18. In conjunction with roller 26, roller 18 appears to supply toner from the toner chamber to the developing chamber. Furthermore, if roller 18 is considered to be a supply roller, Takami does not disclose or suggest a means for preventing the weight of the developing agent "from directly acting in a vertical direction on an entirety of the supply device," as recited in claim 12. For example, it

is clear from Fig. 2 of Takami that the toner would collect on a substantial portion of roller 18. Thus, for at least these reasons claim 12 is not anticipated by Takami.

Takami also fails to anticipate claim 15 because it does not disclose "a first wall disposed between the developing agent container and the supply device [which] extends to completely cover the entirety of the supply device." Regarding the wall component recited in the pending claims, the Office Action cites the blade holder 40 and blade 28 shown in Fig. 2 of Takami. The Office Action asserts that this "wall" covers roller 54. However, as discussed above, roller 54 is not a supply device within the meaning of the pending claims. Additionally, any supply roller disclosed in Takami is not covered in its entirety by the wall portion. In this regard, it is noted that item 28 only partially extends across the top of roller 18. Independent claim 38 recites features similar to those referred to in claim 15. Thus, for at least this reason claims 15 and 38 are not anticipated by Takami.

Takami also fails to anticipate independent claim 22 because it does not disclose a wall between the developing agent container and the supply device where the wall is "integrally formed as one piece with a casing of the developing device." The Office Action does not point to any disclosure in Takami which is indicative of an integrally formed wall. The alleged wall portion (blade holder 40, blade 28) referred to in the Office Action is not integrally formed as one piece with the casing (42). Indeed, Takami teaches that the blade holder 40 is removably mounted on the side wall pair 70 and thus is not integrally formed as one piece. See, Takami at col. 11, lines 22-27. Thus, for at least this reason claim 22 is not anticipated by Takami.

Claim 28 is patentable over Takami because it recites a wall which is "disposed so as to store the entirety of the supply device within a plane of projection in a vertical direction from a free end of the first wall." As explained above, Takami does not disclose or suggest

any structure for covering an entirety of a supply device. Thus, for at least this reason claim 28 is not anticipated by Takami.

The §102 rejection of claim 42 over Takami is also improper, because claim 42 depends from independent claim 14, which was rejected as obvious over a combination of Takami and Takiguchi (discussed below).

Independent claim 14 was rejected under §103 over Takami in view of Takiguchi. Claim 14 is patentable over the applied references because Takiguchi does not disclose a developing device having developing agent which includes a non-magnetic polymerized toner with a packed bulk density that is greater than or equal to 0.646 g/ml. Takiguchi, cited in the Office Action for its alleged teaching of packed bulk density, only describes the bulk density properties of fine silica powder used as a magnetic developer, and does not suggest using non-magnetic polymerized toner particles with the claimed density properties. Thus, for at least this reason claim 14 is patentable over the applied references.

Claims 13, 16, 17, 23-26, 29-37 and 40-46 depend from one of independent claims 12, 14, 15, 28 or 38, and therefore also are patentable over the applied references for at least the reasons enumerated above, as well as for the additional features they recite.

In view of at least the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 12-17, 22-26, 28-38 and 40-46, along with allowed claims 18-20, are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Aaron L. Webb
Registration No. 56,930

JAO:ALW/sqb

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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